



MORE THAN A SCORE:

OPTING OUT OF HIGH STAKES TESTS

By SADIE PRICE-ELLIOTT, age 13



SARAH-JI/FLICKR

Activists, students, parents and teachers are concerned that the amount of time spent on standardized testing takes away from quality learning time for students.

Come standardized testing season this spring, some students are planning to stay home. Students and parents across the country, in greater numbers than ever before, are choosing to opt out of the annual assessments, saying that they are too stressful for students, teachers and schools alike, and that they don't actually reflect how well a student is doing.

"By the time my younger son hit fifth grade, teachers were talking about the tests the first week of school," said Nancy Cauthen, a parent and standardized testing activist with a group called Change the Stakes. That makes sense, since some tests determine whether students move on to the next grade—and whether teachers will receive a pay cut. They also determine how much funding the school gets, with schools that underperform often receiving less.

Activists also note that the tests can be particularly challenging for students who are just learning English, but they still have to take the same tests.

"[English language learners] are two, three, four levels behind. And then they're told about their failures, then the school is labeled as a failure," said teacher Vici Smith, a supporter of the opt-out movement, to the *Philadelphia Public School Notebook*.

Activists also suggest that the tests are connected to the "school-to-prison pipeline," a system that punishes students of color harshly and conditions them for an unsuccessful future. According to the editor of the magazine *Rethinking Schools*, "The more that schools—and now individual teachers—are assessed, rewarded and fired on the basis of student

test scores, the more incentive there is to push out students who bring down those scores."

Why are the stakes so high for these tests? Some U.S. politicians claim that it's because the United States has fallen behind other countries like China when it comes to test scores, especially in math.

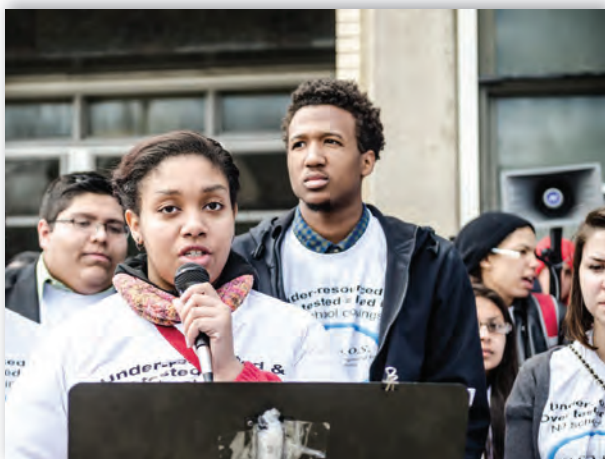
Opting out has its own consequences, which vary from school to school. Because test scores are generally tied to a student's ability to move on to the next grade, parents have to work directly with teachers and principals to find alternatives to the test.

But activists say the tests don't accurately capture how well students are doing. One alternative that Change the Stakes supports is keeping a portfolio of academic progress with samples of student work from throughout the year and written reflections. That doesn't mean tests have to be eliminated altogether, though, says Nancy Cauthen.

"Some standardized tests are ok," she says. "They provide a way to see how different groups of students are doing within a school, a district or a state. But we don't need to test every third to eighth grader in every school every year to get that information."

Cauthen says opting out is the best way to make standardized tests less important. Last year, 60,000 students from New York opted out of tests. According to *Newsworks*, in one Philadelphia school 20 percent of the student population has opted out for this year. In a February 19 blog post for the *Washington Post*, New York principal Carol Burris encouraged the movement, declaring, "The future of our children is hanging from testing's high stakes. The time to opt out is now."

Activists say that standardized tests are not a good way to measure how a student is actually doing. They are suggesting alternative methods for tracking student progress, like the creation of individual portfolio, to track growth.

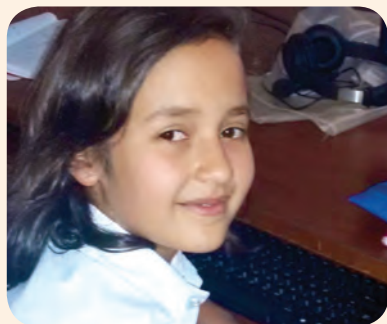


SARAH-JI/FLICKR

The results of some standardized tests are also used to determine the overall success of a school, leading officials to shut down "poorly performing" institutions.



SARAH-JI/FLICKR



MARÍA JOSÉ MAZARIEGO

Meet... María José from El Salvador

Name: María José Mazariego

Age: 12

Lives In: Barrio Mejicanos, San Salvador

Languages Spoken: Spanish

Favorite Food: Chicken lasagna

Favorite Animal: White rabbit

Pets: Two dogs, one rooster,
one hen and two chicks

Favorite Subjects in School: Math

Favorite Activity: Riding my bike

Favorite Flower: Rose

What She Wants to Be When She

Grows Up: An architect, a doctor to
help people and a lawyer specializing
in children's rights



El Salvador at a Glance

Location: Central America, south
of Guatemala and Honduras

Geography: El Salvador is the smallest
country in continental America. It contains
many active volcanoes and more than 300
rivers. Its tropical climate means that it has
two pronounced seasons: wet and dry.

Population: 6.3 million, making it the
most densely populated country
in Central America

Religions: 50% Roman Catholic,
38% evangelical Christian,
9% no religion, 3% other

Languages: Spanish

Learn a Little Spanish

My name is... – Me llamo...
(pronounced: "may yamo")

How old are you? – ¿Cuántos años tienes?
(pronounced: kwan-tos an-yos
tee-yen-es?)

Where are you from? – ¿De donde eres?
(pronounced: day dohn-day air-es?)

60,000

The number of New York state students who opted out of high stakes standardized tests in 2014. Source: *The Washington Post*

nation&world

Ethnic Studies Struggles for a Space in Schools



LATINO USA

Ethnic studies programs include classes that teach about diverse cultures and beliefs, and often highlight the histories of groups of people who have been oppressed.

By **AHSADAH JACKSON**, age 11



Assemblymember Luis Alejo is trying to pass a bill in California that would require public schools in the state to offer ethnic studies classes. Ethnic studies programs include classes that teach about diverse cultures and beliefs, and often highlight the histories of groups of people who have been oppressed.

The Ethnic Studies Movement started in 1968 when African-American, Asian-American, Latino and Native American students at UC Berkeley and San Francisco State University held a strike because they wanted to learn more about the history and culture of their communities. The universities did not offer classes like these, and students of color did not see themselves represented.

While some progress has been made since 1968, there is still a fight in Arizona for ethnic studies classes today. In 2010, Arizona Governor Jan Brewer banned them in Arizona Public Schools. A spokesperson for the governor said at the time, "[P]ublic school students should be taught to treat and value each other as individuals and not be taught to resent or hate other races or classes of people."

But teachers and students who support ethnic studies reject the idea that these classes teach students to hate other races. Director of student equity in Tucson Public Schools, Augustine F. Romero, told reporters, "These courses are about justice and equity, and what is happening is that the Legislature is trying to narrow the reality of those things."

Assemblymember Alejo told reporters that the California law he's proposing is a "direct response to what was happening in Tucson." Alejo says, "When we understand each other's communities, we understand each other better."

Fracking Banned in New York

By **SPIKE TSONG**, age 10



On December 17, 2014, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo banned fracking in New York state because of health risks and after protests from activist groups. Fracking uses fluid to drill through the Earth's surface to get oil and natural gas.

The reports about fracking from the New York State Department of Health said that people who lived near fracking sites had suffered severe symptoms like rashes, nausea, abdominal pain, nosebleeds, headaches and respiratory problems.

In addition to causing health problems, fracking has been linked to environmental problems like earthquakes and the pollution of drinking water.

Before the New York fracking ban, many groups including New Yorkers Against Fracking and Don't Frack New

York, organized protests to try to put a legal ban on fracking. CBS New York reported that in late October, 10 people from the activist group We Are Seneca Lake were arrested during protests in upstate New York.

The New York State Petroleum Council represents many of the world's largest energy companies. The Council's executive director, Karen Moreau, called the ban a "politically motivated and equally misinformed ban on a proven technology."

Critics of the ban say that fracking could have led to more revenue (earnings) for the state if New York had instead charged a fee to cover the local effects of



CREDO:FRACKING/FLICKR

Before the New York fracking ban, many groups, including New Yorkers Against Fracking and Don't Frack New York, organized protests to try to put a legal ban on fracking.

the practice. For example, Pennsylvania gained more than \$204 million in "impact fee" revenue from fracking in 2011.

New Yorkers Against Fracking celebrated the new ban and thanked Governor Cuomo for "listening to the science and protecting the health and safety of New Yorkers over the special interests of the oil and gas industry."

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HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

Just contact **IndyKids**: Adults and kids can write articles, take photos, contribute artwork and help distribute the paper.

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IndyKids, P.O. Box 2281, New York, NY 10163.
or donate online at www.IndyKids.org



Where in the World?

All the places listed below are mentioned in this issue. Can you match them with their general location on the world map at right? Answers are at the bottom of this page.

- a) El Salvador ____

b) New York state ____

c) Tucson ____

d) Greece ____

e) Ayotzinapa ____

f) Haiti ____

g) Berlin ____

h) Edinburgh ____

i) Gaza ____



Youth Activists Take On Pedestrian Safety

By **CHELSEA HALLUMS**, age 11 

Twelve-year-old Sammy Cohen was killed by a Chevrolet van while retrieving a soccer ball near Prospect Park in the fall of 2013. On average, five kids are hit by a car in New York City every day.

Kids like 14-year-old Allison Collard de Beaufort are taking these matters into their own hands. Allison is the founder and president of the Vision Zero Youth Council, part of a project supported by Mayor Bill de Blasio to make the city's streets safer.

"Students in grades four through 12 can join the youth council and have their voices heard by participating in events and reaching out to other people," Collard de Beaufort said.

Under Vision Zero, Mayor de Blasio has lowered the speed limit from 30 miles per hour to 25 miles per hour on busy roads, and installed more speeding cameras. The cameras have led to \$16.96 million worth of fines in 2014,



To encourage drivers to slow down, Allison Collard de Beaufort put up teddy bears along Prospect Park West after the death of Sammy Cohen.

which may persuade more drivers to slow down.

The District Attorney Driver Accountability Initiative is trying to make prosecutors bring more criminal charges against people who injure or kill pedestrians. Less than 1 percent of drivers who hit pedestrians receive tickets.

Meanwhile, Collard de Beaufort put up teddy bears along Prospect Park West after the death of Sammy Cohen. She is hoping that when drivers see the teddy bears, they will stop and remember that children are there. "I don't want anybody else getting hurt," she said.

Campaign Aims to Build Rural Economy on Dairy, Not Prisons

By **SARAH MARTINEZ**, age 11 

In 2014, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo shut down four state prisons and cut \$8 million from the Department of Corrections' budget. This is good news for prison reform activists, but rural residents point out that many people in the state rely on the jobs the prisons provide. "[Closing prisons] might increase unemployment in the area," says dairy farmer Casimer Trybuskiewicz. "[But] that does not justify locking so many people up."

In order to create jobs and economic growth during the 1980s and 90s, many states, including New York, built new prisons in rural areas. Activists like Lauren Melodia thinks there is a better way to improve local economies upstate.

Melodia is the founder of Milk Not Jails, a campaign started in March 2010 that has created an alliance of volunteers, prison justice activists, formerly incarcerated (in prison) people, local food enthusiasts and farmers in urban and rural New York. She believes that agriculture and dairy provide a link between urban and rural communities while building a healthy economic relationship. The campaign also aims to hire formerly incarcerated people to drive the dairy products to be sold at stores in New York City. Tychist Baker, who spent



Milk Not Jails aims to hire formerly incarcerated people to drive the dairy products to be sold at stores in New York City.


years in upstate prisons and is now an organizer with Milk Not Jails, says the campaign has helped him think about alternative paths to creating jobs and building economy in New York state.

So far, Milk Not Jails is a small campaign, but organizers are excited about its potential. Organizer Brendan Beck said, "We exist to encourage New York's economic move away from the false promise of incarceration and towards the healthful and mutually beneficial promise of farms."

newsbriefs




Syriza Party Wins in Greece

By **THEO FRYE YANOS**, age 12 

In the midst of years of crushing government spending cuts and tax increases known as austerity measures, the left-wing party Syriza has won control of the Greek Parliament. Syriza's Alexis Tsipras is now the prime minister of Greece, and he promises to end austerity measures and renegotiate Greek debt with the European banks. In a statement before the election, Tsipras said, "We believe politics and economics should be centered around people's needs, decent work, a thriving welfare state, environmental protections, democracy."



Parents of 43 Missing Mexican Students Meet with U.N.

By **RIDA ALI**, age 11, and **IndyKids Staff** 

After meeting with parents of the 43 students who went missing in Ayotzinapa, Mexico, on September 26, 2014, the United Nations Commission Against Enforced Disappearances has condemned the Mexican government for its handling of the case. Bernabé Abraján Gaspar, father of Adán, one of the missing students, says, "We have been searching for our children, but we cannot find them, we have demanded of our government that they help us."



Haiti Earthquake: 5 Years Later

By **JEFFREY TORRES**, age 10, and **IndyKids Staff** 

Five years after a 2010 earthquake which killed 160,000 people and made 1.5 million more homeless, the Haitian people are still suffering. International donations totaled \$13.5 billion, but according to NPR, most of this money went to foreign aid organizations in Haiti rather than directly to Haitian people or organizations. The cholera epidemic brought by United Nations peacekeepers after the earthquake further devastated the island, killing nearly 9,000 more people.

Introduction

By ELEANOR HEDGES-DUROY, age 12

According to a 2015 index released by Reporters Without Borders, the United States ranks 49th compared to the rest of the world on the issue of freedom of the press. Press freedom is very important for journalists who often uncover wrongdoing by powerful governments and corporations. This frequently involves interviewing **whistleblowers** and other individuals with access to top-secret information. Sometimes journalists risk their jobs and even their own safety to protect these sources and break difficult stories. These are some of the stories of American journalists who have spoken out on behalf of people whose voices needed to be heard by the public.

Ida B. Wells • 1862 – 1931

Ida B. Wells was an African-American journalist and activist who fought against **lynching** in the 1890s in the United States. Wells worked for several publications, co-owned a black newspaper called the *Free Speech and Headlight* and started a movement that made it all the way to the White House.

In 1892, after three black men who owned a grocery store in Memphis were killed by a lynch mob, she took action by writing about it. In response to her journalism, a mob broke into and destroyed the *Free Speech and Headlight* office and threatened to kill her unless she moved.

Even though Wells had to leave her home, she continued to fight against lynching. She helped to establish the Negro Fellowship League, NAACP and the National Association of Colored Women. According to Wells, "The way to right wrongs is to turn the light of truth upon them."

WIKIMEDIA COMMONS



Rubén Salazar • 1928 – 1970

Rubén Salazar was a Mexican-born journalist who covered the 1970s Chicano movement, which was started by Mexican Americans who wanted financial, social and political protection.

After 11 years at the *Los Angeles Times*, he left to join a Spanish-language news station, where he covered police brutality against Latinos.

On August 29, 1970, while covering the National Chicano Moratorium March, which protested that Latinos made up 5.5 percent of those killed in the Vietnam War, Salazar was hit in the head by a tear gas bottle and died. Some believed that Salazar's death was an assassination, not an accident.

Despite his tragic death at 42, he continues to inspire Latino reporters today. "It was the first time I'd seen a Mexican Spanish surname byline on stories about the community in which I had grown up," journalism professor Felix Gutierrez told *Democracy Now!*

CD/CAN



PRESS FREEDOM
THEN and NOW

By ALEJANDRA PAULINO, age 13, ELEANOR HEDGES-DUROY, age 12,
and SOPHIA ROTHMAN, age 11



1892

1970

1981

2015



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS



DEMOCRACY NOW!



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Mumia Abu-Jamal • 1954 – Present

Mumia Abu-Jamal, a Philadelphia radio journalist and member of the radical 1960s **Black Panther Party**, vocally opposed racism and the use of force by police officers. He was being tracked by the FBI because of his outspokenness and connections with the Black Panthers when he was arrested in 1981 and sentenced to death for the murder of a police officer. Mumia maintains his innocence, and according to Amnesty International, "numerous aspects of [his] case clearly failed to meet minimum international standards safeguarding the fairness of legal proceedings."

Mumia is no longer on death row but remains in prison, where he has published books and reported on prison life, the Black Panthers and justice issues. In 2014 Pennsylvania passed a prisoner gag law in an attempt to prevent prisoners from communicating with journalists and publishing books from behind bars, thus keeping the public from hearing their perspectives.

James Risen • 1955 – Present

James Risen, a *New York Times* journalist and author of the book *State of War*, has lived for six years under the threat of jail for keeping his source secret. He refused to testify in court for the trial of a former CIA officer who was charged with revealing secret government information in Risen's book about a failed U.S. attempt to stop Iran's nuclear program.

Despite government demands, James Risen managed to keep his journalistic oath to protect his source. In January 2015, the Justice Department gave up their effort to force Risen to testify in this case. "The significance of this goes beyond James Risen. It affects journalists everywhere," says Joel Kurtzberg, Risen's lawyer. "Journalists need to be able to uphold that confidentiality in order to do their job."

Laura Poitras • 1964 – Present

In 2013, Academy Award-winning filmmaker and journalist Laura Poitras became internationally known for working with Glenn Greenwald to release documents acquired by Edward Snowden about NSA surveillance. The *Guardian* was the first to publish the information, upsetting not only the government, but raising the issue of how much freedom the press should have. The information is slowly being released over time.

Laura Poitras moved to Berlin, Germany, to finish the documentary *Citizenfour* about Snowden after being put on the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's watchlist. Since 2006, she has repeatedly been taken for questioning at airport gates. For example, at JFK Airport in New York City in 2010, armed agents were present to meet her. She told *Salon* that it is "very traumatizing to come home to your own country and have to go through this every time."

Glossary of Terms

Whistleblower - a person who informs an organization or the public about illegal activity happening within an organization or the government.

Lynching - an illegal execution often meant to intimidate a marginalized group of people.

Black Panther Party - a revolutionary African-American party that was founded in 1966 with the purpose of combating police brutality through citizen patrols of black neighborhoods and self defense.



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Chimpanzees Can Learn Foreign Dialects

By MARIANNE NACANAYNAY, age 12

In 2010, zookeepers at Edinburgh Zoo in Scotland started an experiment, placing Dutch and Scottish chimpanzees together. Chimps from different places use different pitched grunts to communicate about the same object. For example, the Dutch chimpanzees use high-pitched grunts for apples while the Scottish chimps use low-pitched grunts. Over time, the Dutch chimpanzees began making grunts similar to those the Scottish chimpanzees used, proving that chimpanzees can learn foreign dialects from each other, which scientists had believed was unique to humans.



ELEANOR HEDGES-DUROY

New Technology Could Reveal Writing on Ancient Scrolls

By ELEANOR HEDGES-DUROY, age 12

In AD 79, Mount Vesuvius erupted, covering Herculaneum, Italy, in hot gases and lava. In 1752, workers uncovered one house, which likely belonged to Julius Caesar's father-in-law, containing a library of more than 350 scrolls of papyrus. Most attempts to read the fragile scrolls have resulted in their destruction. Recently, physicists have created a technique called X-ray phase-contrast imaging and identified letters inside the scrolls. This creates hope for someday interpreting these important writings from ancient philosophers.



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Does Climate Change Affect Wheat Crops?

By UMA CANTONE, age 10

"Wheat is one of the world's most important food crops," says Dr. Senthil Asseng, a professor at University of Florida. We lose 6 percent of our wheat crops for every degree Celsius the temperature rises. That is one-fourth of the wheat trade, which reached more than 147 million tons in 2013. Wheat production needs to grow 60 percent more by the year of 2050 to keep up with population growth.

6%

The percentage of wheat crops that will be lost for every degree Celsius that the temperature rises. Source: The Guardian

culture&activism

Journey of a Drug: Pharmaceuticals and the Environment

By AMIA MCDONALD, age 11

KID

There is an ongoing global wildlife crisis, and according to new research from the *Guardian*, one hidden cause may be **pharmaceuticals** that enter the environment through human and animal waste. Dr. Jessica Couch, senior scientist at Genentech, a biotechnology company, told *IndyKids*, "Pharmaceutical drugs are potent chemicals that have been designed to treat people and animals with various diseases. However, because they are so potent, they can also have a negative impact on **ecosystems**."

Researchers have found that many freshwater fish and amphibians were wiped out in the past 40 years partly because of the discharge of drugs. Although many pharmaceuticals are designed to help people, some cause harm to other living things.

Birth control pills have caused a decrease in fat-head minnows in lakes which then caused a decline in trout that eat minnows. Amphibians have also been negatively affected by the entrance of pharmaceutical contamination. In all, populations of freshwater animals such as fish and amphibians have gone down 75 percent since 1970. Pharmaceuticals have not only contaminated waters, but land as well, since much of the waste has contaminated soil used to fertilize farmland. This has



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Researchers have found that many freshwater fish and amphibians were wiped out in the past 40 years partly because of the discharge of drugs.

caused farmland ecosystems to decline as well.

According to Dr. Couch, "It is our responsibility to carefully monitor and manage the disposition of these chemicals in order to minimize disruption of wildlife biology."

Pharmaceuticals: Drugs used for medicine

Ecosystem: A community of living things interacting with their physical surroundings, such as a forest, a farm or a lake.

Camps Breakerz Send Messages Through Dance

By ADRIAN TORRES, age 9

KID

More than six months after the end of the summer 2014 bombardment of the Gaza Strip by Israeli military forces, much of the territory is still in ruins. Rebuilding efforts have been slow, but a small break-dancing group hopes to inspire youth by raising money to open a dance studio in the rubble.

In 2003, Mohammed Ghraiz established Camps Breakerz in Gaza's Nusairat refugee camp in occupied Palestine. Since then, he and his crew have performed to educate people about the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza.

Camps Breakerz performs for kids and adults in Gaza for free. They express their feelings and increase awareness about the occupation. Because of the occupation, Palestinians cannot travel outside of Gaza if they do not have permission from the Israeli government. Bombs are exploding in the cities, and kids are scared to go outside. When Camps Breakerz performs, the kids are happier and less scared.

The group put on a series of workshops with international humanitarian organization Save the Children to show kids something other than violence. "I want them to see a good way of life," Ghraiz told *TIME* magazine. "I want to tell them ... that they can think about other



MICHALIS KARAGIANNIS & CAMPS BREAKERZ

In 2003, Mohammed Ghraiz established Camps Breakerz in Gaza's Nusairat refugee camp in occupied Palestine.

things besides the siege and war."

Some people in Camps Breakerz's community are concerned about break dancing. "This is a conservative, Muslim society," Ahmed Ismail, a member of Camps Breakerz, told the *Electronic Intifada*. Still, over time, the group has gained the support of local officials and community members.

Their supporters now see them as more than simply a form of entertainment. "We are not just dance," says Ghraiz. "Most shows have a message. We are telling people about our situation and our lives."

Meet IndyKids Reporter, Adedayo Perkovich



MATTHEW KUE

IndyKids reporter Adedayo Perkovich covering the TedYouth Conference in Brooklyn.

By SADIE PRICE-ELLIOTT, age 13



Adedayo Perkovich, age 11, has been writing for *IndyKids* since 2013.

Sadie Price-Elliott: How did you find out about *IndyKids*? What encouraged you to begin writing for the newspaper?

Adedayo Perkovich: My mom told me about it, and since I really like to write, I was intrigued. I also wanted to learn more about social justice, and it seemed like the perfect opportunity. I also was really excited about having a mentor so that I could develop as a young writer.

What is your favorite part about writing for *IndyKids*?

I like the brainstorming part of developing a story. You can also learn about people's personalities by listening to their story ideas, because you can tell what they are interested in.

Besides writing, what are some of your passions?

If this counts, I love to eat chocolate, but I also love to sing in the Young People's Chorus of New York City (YPC), and I love to dance. I used to dance at CUMBE Center for African and Diaspora Dance, but unfortunately the studio has to move to another location.

Has writing for *IndyKids* changed the way you see the world? If so, in what way?

After working with *IndyKids*, I always have my eye out for a story. Before, when my mother used to put on the news I ignored it, but now, every little thing is a future article.

What advice can you give to kids that like to write, or would like to follow their own passions?

I don't mean to be corny, but believe in yourself, and don't do anything that's not true to who you are to make yourself known. If you really want to do something, then your talent and passion will make it clear that you are a force to be reckoned with.

Someday, you could Work with Young People, like Adam Green

By NYLU AVERY BERNSTAYN, age 10



Have you ever thought about working with kids like yourself one day? Meet Adam Green, the founder and executive director of Rocking the Boat, an organization in the South Bronx dedicated to empowering young people by building boats together.

Nylu Avery Bernshtayn: Why did you start Rocking the Boat?

Adam Green: I was in college and not feeling a great degree of connection to what I was learning, and I wanted to do something that gave me more of a connection to my own experience and the things that were going on around me.

I started as a volunteer at a junior high in East Harlem and helped a group of kids build a boat. It was an idea that a teacher had and offered to me, and I had never done anything like that before. The result was a really special experience that

I had with this group of eight junior high school kids. We built this little dinghy that we floated in the pool at the school, and it was just the most exciting thing.

Can you tell us a little about the organization?

We build real wooden sailing boats from scratch, and we use them to teach everything you need to know about sailing and rowing. We also use them to research and restore the river, and we work with professional scientists to do that.

How do you think "boats build kids?"

The opportunity to make something that actually works... builds a sense of confidence and self-esteem. They also learn technical skills, such as math, science and carpentry. Most of all it gives the kids the sense that if they can build a boat, they can build anything, and I think that's the way boats build kids.



ROCKING THE BOAT

On the Scene at the TEDYouth Conference

By ADEDAYO PERKOVICH, age 11



On November 15, 2014, I saw hundreds of eager teens roaming around the Brooklyn Museum, ready to be inspired. But this time it wasn't just by the art. The museum was hosting the TEDYouth conference, a gathering of 400 middle and high schoolers that "is serving both as a source of knowledge and inspiration for youth around the globe." In order to attend the conference, students filled out an application explaining why they wanted to participate, and some made art projects or websites. There was a full day of talks around the theme of "worlds imagined."

I spoke to Lilian Chen, (also known as "Milktea"), a graphic designer at TED and

a competitive gamer who wants to inspire girls to play video games. "I think it's important that we erase older stereotypes—anything that has to do with 'it's a boys club only'—we've got to break down those barriers," she said.

Another interesting talk was by Tahir Hemphill, who presented "Hip Hop, Visualized," where audience members viewed a map he created of all of the places hip hop artists have written about in their lyrics.

Miranda, a ninth-grade attendee, said, "The conference was so diverse in terms of the different subjects, and it inspired me to do what I want to do for my career and not to be afraid to try new things." Excitement was in the air at the Brooklyn Museum, and it was so fun to be a part of it.



DIAN LOFTON/TED

TED graphic designer and competitive gamer Lilian Chen wants to inspire girls to play video games.



The Green Peacock originally came from Asia and today is mostly found in Southeast Asia and India.

- The green peafowl is actually a large pheasant and can live as long as 20 years.
- Green peafowl are **omnivores**: They eat small mammals, snakes, fruits, seeds and insects.
- A group of peafowl is called a party, and a family is called a bevy.

Omnivore: an organism that eats both plants and other animals.

GETTING WILD WITH THE GREEN PEACOCK

By CELINE QUIROZ, age 10



Recognized for its beautiful plumage (feathers), the green peafowl, (commonly known as the green peacock) is one of the most beautiful animals in the world. People commonly call these animals peacocks, but to be more precise, the males are called peacocks and the females are called peahens. The males have pretty fans with feathers in green, blue and purple jewel tones to attract the females. The feathers are also used to camouflage in the green grasses of the forests. If a male peacock feels intimidated it will fan out his tail feathers to look very big and frightening.

The green peacock originally came from Asia and today is mostly found in Southeast Asia and India. It is listed as a "vulnerable" species, which means that it could become extinct because of hunting and habitat loss.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Peafowl are not born with the pretty feathers that make the fan, but they grow them as they mature.



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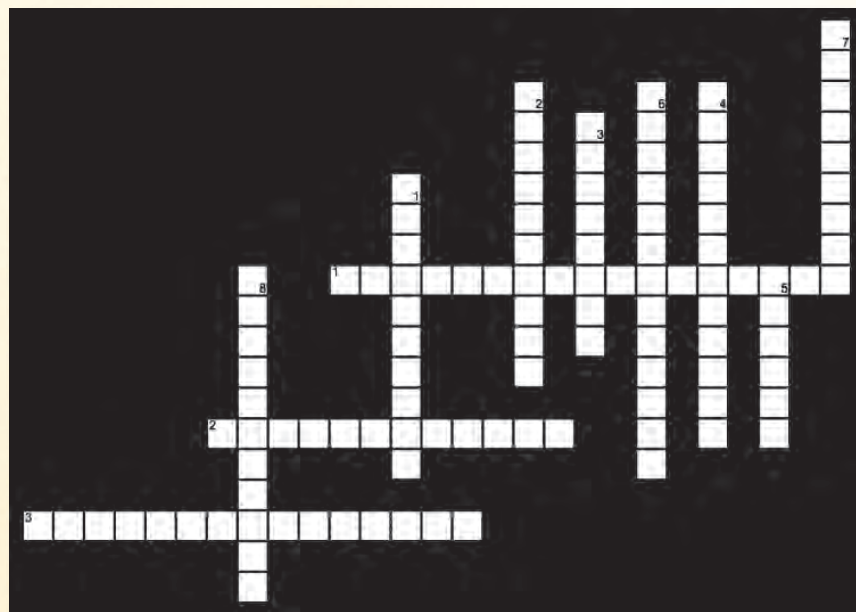
CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS

- Students across the country are opting out of these
- Journalist who recently won an Academy Award for her documentary film *Citizenfour*
- These are polluting ecosystems and causing a severe decline in populations of freshwater animals

DOWN

- Smallest country in continental America
- State where Assemblymember Luis Alejo is trying to pass a bill to require public schools to offer ethnic studies classes
- Just banned in New York state
- Campaign that hopes to enable rural economies to depend on agriculture rather than prisons
- New prime minister of Greece is a member of this political party
- Person who informs an organization or the public about illegal activity happening within the government or an organization
- Co-owner of historic black newspaper the *Free Speech and Headlight*
- These animals are capable of learning foreign dialects (answers on page 2)



ORIGINAL DRAWING BY PAULA PAULINO

By PAULA PAULINO, age 9



ORIGINAL POEM: IT'S ALL ABOUT THAT TEST



By ELEANOR HEDGES DUROY, age 12,
and AUDREN HEDGES DUROY, age 8

Standardized tests are taking over the school
Well what do you say when the state makes **that** rule?
You create all these standardized tests for us to take
Well don't you know that education don't get measured just that way?
It's all about that test, that test, that test, that test.

Geography and math and language arts all disappear
(Wait! What? Where'd they go? Aren't they here??)
All we know is "test prep" when the testing dates are near.
Well we march to computer labs like little guinea pigs
And we sit in those chairs taking tests on screens this big!

It's not fair to students or to teachers, not at all!
To spend all day at school and learn nothing in the halls.

Our teachers tell us to work hard and do our best
But how can we do that when we're taking all this stress??
You know that they can't educate us when their jobs are on the line
That stress shouldn't be theirs, and it shouldn't become mine.

Well I don't wanna be the state's data point no more....
So don't you dare to **track me** only by that little score.
Cause it's all about that test, that test, that test, that test.

Man, I just want to learn something in school.....please?

Paula Isabel Paulino age 9

